



National Weather Service

Storm Data and Unusual Weather Phenomena



December 2000

Location	Date	Time Local/ Standard	Path Length (Miles)	Path Width (Yards)	Number of Persons Killed	Number of Persons Injured	Estimated Damage Property	Estimated Damage Crops	Character of Storm
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MICHIGAN, East

MIZ047

Midland

04 1800EST 0 0 25K Wind
05 0800EST

A bus barn and pavilion, both under construction, were reduced to lumber by strong wind gusts sometime during the night. Wind gusts around 35 mph were enough to topple the structures, being built in the city of Midland for the Calvary Baptist Academy.

MIZ049-054>055-
061>063-068>070-
075>076-082>083

Huron - Tuscola - Sanilac - Genesee - Lapeer - St. Clair - Livingston - Oakland - Macomb - Washtenaw - Wayne - Lenawee - Monroe

05 0100EST 0 0 Snow
1000EST

A clipper low pressure system passed north of the Great Lakes, bringing light snow and windy conditions to much of southeast Michigan. Snowfall amounts were only around an inch or less. However, the snow and blowing snow quickly melted and then refroze on area roads, producing unusually dangerous driving conditions. The morning commute became a serious mess, with dozens of accidents. An Ypsilanti man was killed, and another injured, when their car slid off a road and overturned. Two serious injuries resulted from a rear-end collision near Kinde in Huron County. Interstate 75 and US 23 in Monroe County both suffered long backups, as tractor-trailers were unable to gain enough traction to move. Several school districts in Monroe County were forced to cancel classes.

This would prove to be just the opening act in a month-long onslaught of winter weather.

MIZ082>083

Lenawee - Monroe

07 0900EST 0 0 Snow
2300EST

A clipper low pressure system moved east across far southern lower Michigan on the evening of the 7th. Snow developed out ahead of the low, with the heaviest snow near the Ohio border. Reports of 4 to 5 inches of snowfall were common across Monroe and Lenawee Counties; the highest amount, 5.5 inches, was in Hudson. Snow amounts dwindled as you went further north; most of metro Detroit got 2 to 4 inches, as did Port Huron. Many auto accidents resulted, though most were minor.

MIZ047>049-053>055-
060>062-068>069

Midland - Bay - Huron - Saginaw - Tuscola - Sanilac - Shiawassee - Genesee - Lapeer - Livingston - Oakland

11 1200EST 0 1 1.1M Heavy Snow
12 0500EST

MIZ063-070-075>076-
082>083

St. Clair - Macomb - Washtenaw - Wayne - Lenawee - Monroe

11 1200EST 0 0 50K Winter Storm
12 0500EST

Washtenaw County
8 NW Ann Arbor

11 2330EST 0 0 1.1M Lightning

A lightning strike ignited a large home just northwest of Ann Arbor. The home was destroyed by fire

MIZ049-054>055

Huron - Tuscola - Sanilac

12 0030EST 0 0 Blizzard
0330EST

A powerful storm system moved east just south of Michigan, dumping heavy snow across all of the area, with some freezing rain and sleet near the Ohio border. Near blizzard conditions were found across all of the area, with an outright blizzard in the Thumb. Many schools were closed for two to four days after the storm. Mail delivery the next day was spotty at best, and many businesses and government offices were closed. Several communities declared snow emergencies, forbidding all non-emergency travel until crews could clear roads. Presidential Emergency Declarations were made for all counties in southeast Michigan except Wayne, Lenawee, and Monroe.



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MICHIGAN, East

Specific snowfall amounts and impacts of the storm, by county:

Bay: 7" in Essexville; 8" near Linwood; 8 to 10" in Bay City with lightning.

Genesee: 14" in Fenton; 13-14" in Burton with 45 mph winds. In Flint, 12-14" fell, along with 45 mph winds and 4 foot drifts. Flint Bishop International Airport closed in the afternoon of the 11th, and ended up with 14", the third largest snowfall on record. Up to 200 cars were stranded on Interstate 75 just south of Flint during the storm. The Flint Journal was unable to publish on the 12th, the first time that happened in 42 years (it was a strike that shut the newspaper down then). This was believed to be the first time ever that the Flint Journal did not publish due to a weather event in its 124 year history. In Burton, the roof of a window manufacturing company collapsed. One person suffered a hand injury.

Huron: 6-10" in Bad Axe; 13" near Rapson; 16.2" in Port Hope with blizzard conditions and wind gusts to 58 mph; 8" in Sebewaing.

Lapeer: 12-16" near Lapeer (city), with 3 foot drifts and 40 mph winds, closing the Lapeer Post Office for the first time ever due to weather. More than 12" in Imlay City. Interstate 69 was closed from Davison to Imlay City during the night.

Lenawee: 5.7" in Adrian with some freezing rain; 5.8" in Tipton; Hudson had 2.5" and freezing rain, and missed mail delivery for the first time since the blizzard of 1978.

Livingston: 10.4" in Hell; 10" in Howell; 10-15" in Brighton, with 3 to 5 foot drifts and 40 to 50 mph winds.

Macomb: 12" in Harrison Township, Romeo, Sterling Hts, and Utica; 9.8" in Mt Clemens; 9-11" in St Clair Shores. A house burned to the ground in Richmond during the night, as firefighters were unable to reach the home due to weather and road conditions.

Midland: 7 to 11" in Midland (city) with 35 mph winds; 8.6" in the south central portion of the county.

Monroe: 8.5" just southeast of Milan; up to half an inch of freezing rain in Monroe (city) along with 2-5" of snow, with several trees downed due to ice and wind, and power outages to 2500 homes, and several injury accidents; 3-5" in Dundee with some sleet and freezing rain, and 2 foot drifts covered US-23.

Oakland: 12" in Royal Oak; 12-14" in Oxford; 14" in White Lake; 11-12" in Farmington and Farmington Hills; 11" in West Bloomfield; 8.8" in Milford; 11-12" in South Lyon with 40 mph winds.

St Clair: 12.3" near Avoca, with thunder and a 48 mph wind gust; 14.7" in Ruby; 17.5" in Yale, which was the biggest storm since 1947; 14" in Capac. In Port Huron, 12-20" of snow fell along with thunder and wind gusts to 50 mph, closing the Blue Water Bridge to Canada, and destroying a golf dome.

Saginaw: 8.5" in Saginaw (city); 8" near Shields with thunder and near blizzard conditions; 6.7" in Chesaning; 11" in Frankenmuth with 3 foot drifts, roads drifted shut, 40 mph winds, and lightning. MBS (Tri Cities) International Airport had many flights cancelled, and the airport was closed at 830 pm on the 11th, with 40 mph winds, visibilities as low as 2 feet, and snowfall of 9.8".

Sanilac: 13" in Brown City; 12" in Sandusky; 8" in Marlette; 8.9" in Deckerville.

Shiawassee: 10.2" in Owosso with very strong winds; 12" in Byron; 15.5" in Morrice; 9.3" in Corunna.

Tuscola: 8" in Akron with thunder; 10.5" in Caro Center; 11.0" in Cass City; 13.5" in Millington and Fairgrove Township; 10-14" in Vassar. In Caro, 16.3" of snow fell, along with 40-50 mph wind, zero visibility, 4 foot drifts, and lightning, producing 41 automobile accidents, including an 18 car pile-up on the north side of town that required snowmobiles to rescue stranded motorists.

Washtenaw: 10.5" in Chelsea; 8-12" in Ann Arbor; 7-12" in Ypsilanti with 35 mph gusts along with thunder and sleet, closing Eastern Michigan University for only the second time ever; 7.5" near Saline; more than 10" in Dexter; 6-12" in Manchestee.

Wayne: 6-12" in Dearborn and Dearborn Hts, as well as 45 mph winds and around 50 auto accidents; 7" in Grosse Pointe Farms; 8-10" in Hamtramck; 6-8" in Romulus with sleet; 12" in Belleville; 5" and some freezing rain in Grosse Ile (power outages in nearby Trenton); 4-6" in Flat Rock; 8.1" in Allen Park; three-eighths inches of freezing rain in Rockwood; 8-11" in Wayne (city) with some sleet and 35 mph winds; 10.5" in Livonia; 6-9" in Plymouth and Canton; golf dome collapsed in Northville. At Detroit Metropolitan Airport, 6.1" fell, with 197 departures and 165 arrivals were cancelled (many hours ahead of time), and 150 travelers spent the night at the airport. Cancellations numbered 125 the next day.

MIZ082>083

Lenawee - Monroe

13 1400EST
14 0330EST

0 0

Heavy Snow

MIZ047>049-053>055-
060>063-068>070-075>076

Midland - Bay - Huron - Saginaw - Tuscola - Sanilac - Shiawassee - Genesee - Lapeer - St. Clair - Livingston - Oakland -
Macomb - Washtenaw - Wayne

13 1500EST
14 0330EST

0 0

25K

Snow

A strong upper level disturbance helped develop a low pressure system in the central Ohio Valley on the 13th. The low moved quickly off to the northeast that night. This system brought another round of snow to the central and southern Great Lakes. The heaviest snow was near the Ohio border, with 6.5 inches of snow in Monroe and Adrian. Most of the rest of the area picked up 3 to 6 inches. The accumulated snow caused a golf dome in Burton to burst while it was being deflated.



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MICHIGAN, East

MIZ069

Oakland

16 1000EST

0

0

200K

Rain

A strong low pressure system moved across the northern Great Lakes late on the 16th. Warm air moving north ahead of the system allowed precipitation - which began as snow - to switch to freezing rain and then just rain. The precipitation was not especially heavy, with around a quarter to a half inch of mainly rain. That was still enough to do in an aircraft hangar in New Hudson. The additional weight of the rain, falling onto deep snow on the roof, was enough to cause the hangar to collapse. Three airplanes were damaged.

MIZ047>048-053>054-
060>061

Midland - Bay - Saginaw - Tuscola - Shiawassee - Genesee

17 0100EST
1300EST

0

0

560K

Heavy Snow

MIZ063-068>069-075-082

St. Clair - Livingston - Oakland - Washtenaw - Lenawee

17 0100EST
1300EST

0

0

400K

Snow

More snow. As the low moved to the east, arctic air returned to the Great Lakes, changing precipitation back to snow. A strong upper level disturbance enhanced snowfall during the early morning hours of the 17th. Snowfall amounts were as high as 7 inches in Wheeler, Akron, Fairgrove Township (Tuscola County), Corunna, Bay City, Saginaw, and Flint. In the Tri-Cities area, high winds combined with the snow to drift many roads shut, and to snap off snow-covered tree limbs. About 7000 homes lost power. In Flint, the weight of the accumulated snow collapsed the roof of a banquet room at a Ramada Inn. A home patio roof also gave way in Flint. Much of the rest of southeast Michigan saw 2 to 4 inches of snow. A furniture/appliance/electronics store in Tecumseh saw its roof collapse under the snow. The storm contributed to dozens of accidents on Washtenaw County roads.

This storm would be the last big one of the month, though another few inches would fall here and there. A low pressure system would drop 2 to 4 inches of snow on the night of the 18th into the morning of the 19th. A lake effect snow event would produce isolated reports of heavy snow in the Thumb just before the New Year. Detroit would end the month with 25.1 inches of snow, making it the 3rd snowiest December on record, dating back to 1870. But both Flint and Saginaw had that beat. With 35.3 and 40.3 inches of snow respectively, both cities set all time snowfall records for ANY month.

The snow would cause problems across southeast Michigan for weeks to come. The sheer volume of it was difficult to handle, and the process of moving it out of the way became difficult (and expensive), as there was almost no place to put it. Many communities used the majority of their snow removal budget, and their road salt supply, during December. There were fears that both would run out if the winter did not calm down. In Lenawee County, snow removal expenditures were greater in December 2000 than for all of the previous winter. Ice dams and water seepage confounded thousands of businesses and homeowners well into January. Several house fires erupted when meltwater seeped into electric meter boxes.

MIZ047>049-053>055-
060>063-068>070-
075>076-082>083

Midland - Bay - Huron - Saginaw - Tuscola - Sanilac - Shiawassee - Genesee - Lapeer - St. Clair - Livingston - Oakland - Macomb - Washtenaw - Wayne - Lenawee - Monroe

21 1800EST
29 1200EST

0

0

475K

Extreme Cold

Though the worst of the snow was over, the worst of the cold was just beginning. Temperatures never got out of single digits on the 22nd, with Detroit seeing a high of only 4 degrees, after a morning low of 3 below zero. Flint wasn't much better, recovering from a low of -5 to reach 8 degrees in the afternoon. That would prove to be the coldest daytime temperatures of the month - but some colder nights were still in store, especially for Flint. Christmas morning dawned clear and frigid, with a morning low of 13 degrees



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MICHIGAN, East

below zero at Flint, setting an all-time mark for the month of December (the old record was -12 on Dec 23, 1989). Three nights later, Flint would give the new record a run for its money, coming up just short with a low of -11 on the 28th (this was still a new record for the day).

The arctic weather would take a toll on pipes. Both Ypsilanti High School and Chelsea High School had pipes burst over Christmas weekend, damaging classrooms. Several buildings on the University of Michigan campus in Ann Arbor had similar ruptures, including the School of Dentistry and Wolverine Tower.

The cold also hampered shipping interests. Ice formation was extremely rapid on the Great Lakes and the connecting waterways. Several freighters got stuck in ice on both the Detroit River and Lake St Clair, blocking the shipping channel and bringing dozens of ships to a halt. Icebreaker assistance was needed to free the freighters. Ferry service on the St Clair River between Michigan and Canada was also interrupted due to ice jams.

Average temperatures for the month were 19.3 degrees in Detroit, 16.6 at Flint, and 17.2 in Saginaw. End result: the 4th coldest December of all time in Detroit, and the 2nd coldest at both Flint and Saginaw. Combined with the high snowfall totals, and it's safe to say: if you don't like cold and snow, then December of 2000 was the most miserable December in southeast Michigan history. No other December on record comes close to its combination of heavy snow and brutal cold

MIZ049

Huron

**30 0400EST
2200EST**

0

0

Heavy Snow

An extended period of lake effect snow occurred in the Thumb area, on the back side of a strong East Coast storm system. Around 2 to 4 inches of snow fell every 12 hours for several days. During the heaviest snow on the 30th, up to 8 inches of snow accumulated along the Huron County lakeshore. Also on the 30th, a fire gutted a home in Fillion (Huron County), killing the family dog; accumulated snow made it almost impossible for firefighters to make it to the scene.